

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 042325

45

ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 RSC-01 SSO-00 ISO-00 /017 R

DRAFTED BY: S/S-O: RBMCMULLEN

APPROVED BY: S/S-O: RELTZ

S/S: DMILLER

----- 097962

O 021741Z MAR 74 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 042325

TOSEC 302, TODEP 116

FOLLOWING REPEAT PARIS 5364 ACTION SECSTATE INFO LONDON BONN

ROME DUBLIN LUXEMBOURG COPENHAGEN BRUSSELS THE HAGUE

EC BRUSSELS NATO BORDEAUX LYON MARSEILLE NICE STRASBOURG

MARTINEQUE 01 MAR 74

QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 5364

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, FR

SUBJECT: NEW FRENCH GOVERNMENT--ASSESSMENT

REF: PARIS 5259

1. SUMMARY: REAPPOINTMENT OF MESSMER AT THE HEAD  
OF SMALLER, LEANER, MORE COHESIVE GOVERNMENT HELPS  
PRESIDENT POMPIDOU SIMULTANEOUSLY TO ACCOMPLISH  
SEVERAL POLITICAL ENDS. HE HAS CLEARLY AND STRONGLY  
REAFFIRMED HIS CONFIDENCE IN MESSMER, WHOSE RE-  
APPOINTMENT HAS LAID TO REST, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY,  
SPECTULATION OVER A SUCCESSOR TO POMPIDOU AND OVER  
POSSIBLE EARLY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. HE HAS  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 042325

RECAPTURED HIS CONTROL OVER THE TIMING OF POLITICAL

INITIATIVES. HE HAS RID THE GOVERNMENT OF SEVERAL MINISTERS WHO HAD PERFORMED POORLY AND HAD CAUSED TROUBLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT. HE WILL SEEK TO PRESENT THE NEW GOVERNMENT AS ONE BETTER ABLE TO COPE WITH THE PROBLEMS CURRENTLY FACING FRANCE THAN COULD ITS PREDECESSOR. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, NEVERTHELESS, WHETHER THE FRENCH WILL IN FACT ACCEPT THE GOVERNMENT AS NEW AND DIFFERENT SINCE EVERY MEMBER OF IT WAS IN THE LAST GOVERNMENT, MOST OF THEM REMAINING IN THEIR OLD POSTS, AND IT CONTINUES TO BE HEADED BY THE LACKLUSTER MESSMER. NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES EXPECTED IN FRENCH FOREIGN OR DEFENSE POLICIES.  
END SUMMARY

2. THE PRINCIPAL SURPRISE OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT ITSELF IS HOW LITTLE IT HAS CHANGED. MESSMER, OF COURSE, REMAINS AS PRIME MINISTER. THREE MINISTERS, GUICHARD, OF TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT, TAITTINGER OF JUSTICE AND GISCARD OF FINANCE, REMAIN AT THEIR POSTS BUT RECEIVE THE PRESTIGIOUS TITLE OF MINISTER OF STATE. THEIR INFLUENCE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT PRESUMABLY INCREASES. THE INCUMBENTS IN MOST OTHER IMPORTANT MINISTRIES ALSO STAY ON. IN SWAPPING CHIRAC AND MARCELLIN, WHO NOW GO TO INTERIOR AND AGRICULTURE RESPECTIVELY, POMPIDOU HOPES TO LESSEN THE EFFECT OF THE BAD PRESS AND CRITICISM OF SOME POLICE SERVICES AND OF MARCELLIN PERSONALLY, MOST RECENTLY BECAUSE OF THE CANARD ENCHAINE BUGGING AFFAIR. POMPIDOU ALSO PRESUMABLY WISHED TO STOP THE CREATION OF POLITICAL FIEFDOMS BY CHIRAC AND ROYER, AMONG FRENCH FARMERS AND SMALLSHOPKEEPERS RESPECTIVELY. THEIR TRANSFERRAL FROM AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE TAKES THEM AWAY FROM THEIR SPECIAL CONSTITUENCIES.

3. THE NUMBER OF MINISTERS IS REDUCED FROM TWENTY-TWO TO FIFTEEN AND THAT OF STATE SECRETARIES FROM FIFTEEN TO THIRTEEN. THIS SHOULD SERVE TO IMPROVE GOVERNMENTAL COHESION AND COORDINATION  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 042325

ESPECIALLY SINCE ONLY THE MINISTERS WILL NOW PARTICIPATE IN CABINET MEETINGS. ADDITIONALLY, POMPIDOU MUST BE PLEASED AT DROPPING DRUON, STASI, CHARBONNEL, POUJADE, AND MALAUD, ALL OF WHOM HAVE EMBARRASSED THE PRESIDENT OR PRIME MINISTER BY MAKING INTEMPERATE STATEMENTS, SOME OF THEM DIRECTLY COUNTER TO GOVERNMENT POLICY. THE SMALLER CABINET GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF A "WAR CABINET", OF

A LEAN, TOUGH ADMINISTRATION TO ENABLE FRANCE  
BETTER TO SOLVE CURRENT PROBLEMS SUCH AS ENERGY  
AND INFLATION. POMPIDOU PLEDGED HIS ACTIVE  
LEADERSHIP TO SOLVE SUCH PROBLEMS IN THIS YEAR-END  
ADDRESS TO THE NATION. THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS  
DESIGNED TO SERVE AS AN EXAMPLE OF THIS DETERMINATION.

4. PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT PURPOSE BEHIND THIS  
MINISTERIAL SHAKEUP WAS  
POMPIDOU'S DESIRE TO REAFFIRM, THE CLEAREST  
AND MOST UNAMBIGUOUS WAY POSSIBLE,  
HIS CONFIDENCE IN MESSMER. IN REAPPOINTING MESSMER,  
POMPIDOU HAS PROBABLY HALTED, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY,  
THE SPATE OF RUMORS REGARDING THIS SUCCESSION  
AND THE POSSIBILITY OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN  
THE NEAR FUTURE. HAD HE APPOINTED AS PRIME MINISTER  
ANY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFULS, E.G., GISCARD  
D'ESTAING OR CHABAN-DELMAS, IT WOULD IMMEDIATELY  
HAVE BEEN CONSTRUED AS INVOLVING THE NOMINATION  
OF POMPIDOU'S DAUPHIN. MESSMER IS NOT GENERALLY  
CONSIDERED TO HAVE PRESIDENTIAL AMBITIONS, AND IS  
THUS A "NEUTRAL" CHOICE AS PRIME MINISTER. IN  
REAPPOINTING MESSMER, POMPIDOU HAS LEFT ALL HIS  
OPTIONS OPEN AND HAS TAKEN CONTROL OF THE TIMING  
OF EVENTS IN FRENCH POLITICAL LIFE. THERE IS  
STILL TIME BEFORE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS FOR  
POMPIDOU TO CHANGE HIS PRIME MINISTER AT LEAST  
ONCE MORE. OR, AS WE HAVE HEARD RECENTLY, POMPIDOU  
MAY DECIDE THAT HE WISHES TO BE SUCCEDED BY  
MESSMER HIMSELF, IN WHICH CASE MAINTAINING  
HIM IN OFFICE WOULD BE LOGICAL.

5. IT IS QUESTIONABLE HOW SUCCESSFULLY THE NEW  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 042325

GOVERNMENT WILL BE ABLE TO PROJECT THE IMAGE  
OF A TIGHT, DYNAMIC TEAM. TO MANY FRENCH, AND  
NOT MERELY THOSE OF THE LEFT AND CENTER OPPOSITION,  
THE SHAKEUP APPEARS YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF EXCESSIVELY  
AUTHORITARIAN BEHAVIOR BY THE PRESIDENT. MOREOVER,  
THE FACT THAT ALL THE NEW MINISTERS SERVED IN THE  
PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT IS BOUND TO SEEM TO MANY  
FRENCH AS AN INSULT TO THEIR INTELLIGENCE. IT WILL  
BE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO RECONCILE A NEED FOR CHANGE  
OF GOVERNMENT WITH THE MAINTENANCE IN THEIR FUNCTIONS  
OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND NEARLY ALL HIS CABINET.  
AT THE LEAST SUCH A SHAKEUP WILL APPEAR TO MANY  
AS ILL-ADVISED, SINCE IT CHANGES NOTHING, AND,  
THUS AS MARKING ANOTHER STEP IN THE DECLINE OF  
POMPIDOU'S POLITICAL JUDGMENT.

6. MESSMER WAS INTERVIEWED BRIEFLY ON NATIONWIDE TV, EVENING OF MARCH 1. HE PUT THE ACCENT ON THE NEW, LEAN FORM THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN, NOTING FOR INSTANCE THE SMALLER CABINET MEETINGS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT IT WAS THE STYLE OF GOVERNING THAT WOULD CHANGE, NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES. HE ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO ADDRESS THE FRENCH POPULATION MORE OFTEN. HE SAID THAT ENERGY WAS THE FIRST PROBLEM THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD TACKLE, WITH AN INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON THIS SUBJECT CALLED FOR MONDAY, MARCH 4. HE APPEALED TO THE NATION FOR ITS SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN THE PRESENT, DIFFICULT TIMES TO KEEP FRANCE ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN EUROPE AND THE WORLD.

7. AS FAR AS FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS ARE CONCERNED, THE GOVERNMENTAL SHAKEUP SHOULD INVOLVE NO CHANGES. THE FORMULATION AND CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY WILL REMAIN EXCLUSIVELY THE PRESERVE OF THE ELYSEE -- AND OF JOBERT WHO STAYS ON AT THE QUAI D'ORSAY. GISCARD D'ESTAING'S POSITION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT HAS APPARENTLY BEEN STRENGTHENED SOMEWHAT THANKS TO THE DEPARTURE, FOR EXAMPLE, OF CHARBONNEL AND THE TRANSFER OF ROYER, WITH BOTH OF WHOM GISCARD

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 042325

HAD DIFFICULTIES. MESSMER'S STRENGTHENED POSITION SHOULD NOT RESULT IN CHANGES IN THE WAY IN WHICH ECONOMIC POLICY IS MADE AND IMPLEMENTED. THE NEW GOVERNMENT MAY FIND IT EASIER TO TAKE INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE EXPORTS AND TO CHANGE THE RATE OF VALUE-ADDED TAX, BUT THESE DO NOT REPRESENTED CHANGES IN BASIC POLICY. IT IS TOO EARLY TO JUDGE ANY IMPACT ON FRENCH ENERGY POLICY OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S CONCENTRATION ON THAT PROBLEM. HOWEVER, AS MESSMER SAID, IT IS STYLE, NOT SUBSTANCE THAT IS LIKELY TO CHANGE AND THIS SHOULD BE AS TRUE ON ENERGY QUESTIONS AS IT IS ON OTHER MATTERS.

STONE UNQTE CASEY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN



## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** GOVERNMENT REFORM, CABINET, PRIME MINISTER, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, TOSEC 302  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 02 MAR 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974STATE042325  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** O: RBMCMULLEN  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19740372/aaaacoze.tel  
**Line Count:** 214  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ORIGIN SS  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** PARIS 5259  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 27 MAR 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <27 MAR 2002 by collinp0>; APPROVED <04 JUN 2002 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** NEW FRENCH GOVERNMENT--ASSESSMENT  
**TAGS:** PGOV, FR, (MESSMER, PIERRE)  
**To:** AMMAN JAKARTA  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005